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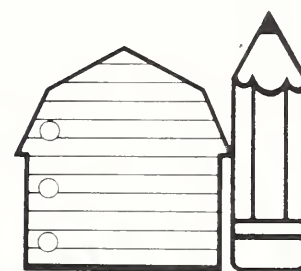
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Ag in the Classroom

Notes

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Department of
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A bi-monthly newsletter for the AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help create greater awareness about agriculture for students in grades K-12. For information, contact: Shirley Traxler, Director, Room 232-W, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. 202/447-5727

'Cross-fertilization' Brings New Breed of Ideas to Indiana Schools

"Ag in the Classroom is a super idea!" says Judy Carley, Secretary of the Indiana Agricultural Awareness Council. "Up until this point there was no coordination of agricultural information going into the schools. State organizations, commodity groups, agribusinesses — all operated well within their own bailiwick, but without knowing what everyone else was doing. Ag in the Classroom serves as a wonderful coordination point."

In fact, the Ag in the Classroom program has been getting off the ground in Indiana for the last two years. The Indiana Farm Bureau Inc., where Carley works as the Director of the Women's Department, was instrumental in setting up Indiana's program after members attended the first AITC planning meeting in Nebraska four years ago. Recently, the program was formalized under the Indiana Institute for Food, Agriculture and Nutrition, so the Council decided to have a formal kick-off. (See Block, p. 1).

Indiana has not been without programs for teaching their children about the state's number one industry. For example, one program offers 120 trained volunteers who visit the schools and talk to 300,000 students every year about agriculture and nutrition. One goal of Indiana Ag in the Classroom is to publicize programs like these to teachers and school administrators.

Since Indiana is a textbook adoption state, where certain texts are approved for use across the state, the Indiana Agricultural Awareness Council

Secretary Block Helps Kick-off Indiana Ag in the Classroom

"When we decided to have a formal kick-off for the Indiana Ag in the Classroom program, our first thought was to invite Secretary Block — I mean, why not shoot high?" said Judy Carley, Secretary of the Indiana Agricultural Awareness Council. As it worked out, Secretary Block came to the Indiana State Fair and led the day's Ag in the Classroom kick-off events.

Secretary Block participated in a media breakfast and was keynote speaker at a luncheon jointly sponsored by the State Fair and the Indiana Institute of Food, Agriculture and Nutrition — the parent group for the Indiana Ag in the Classroom program. The Secretary also rode in the Farmer's Day Parade.

The day's highlight came when Secretary Block visited the Grassy Creek School in Marion County to meet with the children and see their gardens. Warren Township has had a garden program for grade school children for over 20 years. Secretary Block learned that the students tend their own plots during the summer and practice farming techniques such as mulching with black plastic. Says Carley, "These kids, their teachers, the principal and superintendent are all enthusiastic about starting Ag in the Classroom because they understand something about how things grow and the importance of agriculture."



Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block (second from left) tours the gardens of Grassy Creek School with junior farmers. He is joined by Indiana Lt. Governor John Mutz, State Commissioner of Agriculture (center), and the Superintendent of the Indiana Department of Education, Dr. Dean Evans (right).

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From the Director

Dear Readers,

I am pleased to present the first issue of Ag in the Classroom Notes. This is your newsletter. In it you'll find: the latest on Ag in the Classroom activities across the country; guides to resource materials; ideas on how to spruce up your own AITC program; and whatever news and highlights you send in!

As Director of Ag in the Classroom for USDA, I have had the pleasure of meeting with many of you and talking to others by telephone. Your dedication and enthusiasm for this program is commendable and I applaud you for making Ag in the Classroom a success.

If you have any questions, need materials, want to offer advice, or if you have some news for AITC Notes, please feel free to write or call.



Shirley Traxler

The National Conference of State Legislatures — a body composed of legislators from every state — adopted the following resolution in August 1985.

Our survival depends on a sufficient supply of food, shelter and goods, and the knowledge of how to sustain their production. This knowledge requires an understanding of the roles of food, wood, other plant fibers and minerals in our survival.

In this country, as a result of changing technology, a majority of people are far removed from providing these basic survival needs for themselves and have little real awareness of their dependence on the production and flow of such raw materials.

Therefore, the National Conference of State Legislatures encourages state legislatures to suggest objective information regarding these functions in teaching materials be used in our school systems in order to heighten our society's awareness of the essential contributions of agriculture, forestry and mining to this nation's survival.

Legislatures are also encouraged to support programs such as the United States Department of Agriculture's "Ag in the Classroom" project which promotes these goals.

Mississippi Teachers Take a Field Trip

From Carthage, Rolling Fork, Cedar Bluff, Florence, Starkville, and 9 other towns across Mississippi, they came to the Industrial Education Building on the campus of Mississippi State

University on a hot Sunday afternoon in July. Teachers from all over the state showed up to register for a workshop on Ag in the Classroom, sponsored by the Mississippi Farm Bureau and MSU.

That night, participating teachers got a taste of the week ahead at a mouth-watering catfish supper served by the Catfish Farmers of Mississippi. The group discovered fossils over 60 million years old on a walking tour of the Tennessee Tombigbee Waterway. The

evening was filled with country music. And this was just the first day!

After a welcoming phone call from Shirley Traxler, Director of Ag in the Classroom with USDA, the seminar got into full swing on Monday with a series of discussions on agriculture today, including "Farming Around the World," "Farming in This Nation," and "Farming in Mississippi." A week of discussions and lectures followed on subjects including: Plant Science Research; Government and Agriculture; Agriculture in Food Science and Human Nutrition; Computer Literacy through Agriculture; and Soil Testing.

A parade of field trips included: a visit to a veterinary school; a film from the Extension Service; a tour of the Progressive Farmer Radio Network; and a second tour of the Tennessee-Tombigbee lock and dam system.

Not a minute was wasted! Evenings and meals were filled with equally interesting and enjoyable lessons: a workshop on floral design; a breakfast of "incredible edible eggs;" a private viewing of the movie *Country*; and an ice cream tasting session.

Although the workshop was over on Friday, agriculture will never be over in the minds of those teachers who participated in this Ag in the Classroom workshop. They left with new ideas, new friends in agriculture, and a new resolve to teach this information to their students — through reading, science, arithmetic, social studies, and other areas using ag-based learning activities. As one teacher put it: "Thanks for the experience."

Contact: Helen Jenkins (601) 296-3200



Tips on Teacher Training

Teacher training is the key to a successful Ag in the Classroom program. Teachers teach what they understand, what they feel is important and what fits into their curriculum. Teacher training can be done in an evening, a day, a week or a semester. Here are some tips gleaned from experiences of people in the AITC network.

1. The planning of teacher training is best done by educators. Work with your state university, teacher training institution or teachers organization (i.e., Council on Economic Education, science teachers or social studies teachers associations) in planning and putting on teacher training.

2. Teachers want course credits for training they take. Sponsor training through a college or school district so you can offer some kind of graduate or school district credit.

3. Organize your training so teachers can easily use what they've learned in their classrooms.

4. Make teacher training fun. Include trips, hands-on experiences and visits with farmers. Make teachers' introduction to agriculture exciting.

There is teacher training going on throughout the Ag in the Classroom network. Here are a few examples:

Mark Linder, California, offers a 5-day comprehensive program for professionals in education; a 15-hour, one-unit university course for teacher certificate candidates; and 1-½ to 2-hour workshops for working teachers.

Megan Camp, Shelburne Farms, Vermont, offers hands-on teacher training for elementary school teachers incorporating information on science and environment.

Barbara Koesch, Massachusetts, says teacher training is an integral part of the Mass. program. Materials are given to teachers only after they have completed training.

Ellen Hellerich, Nebraska, offers four-day teacher tours and two- to five-day curriculum workshops plus other inservice sessions for teachers.

Cleo Cleveland, North Dakota, offers a week-long summer teacher training program which includes visits to farms and ag industries.

Let us know what you're doing. And feel free to call on others in the network who you think might be able to help you.

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Ag in the Classroom meets The Lone Star State

"I envision a program here in Texas," said Leisa Boley, Project Director for Texas Ag in the Classroom, "that instills in students the same respect for agriculturalists that currently exists for doctors, lawyers, business people, and teachers." Boley was speaking before 27 agricultural and educational groups at the planning meeting of Texas Ag in the Classroom held August 29 in Austin. The Texas Department of Agriculture recently initiated the development of Ag in the Classroom by hiring Boley as a consultant from September 1 to December 31, 1985.

Other speakers at the one-day organizational meeting reinforced the importance of teaching the younger generation about agriculture. "Students make up 21.8% of the Texas population," said Bart Kaderly, Special Programs Director of the Texas Department of Agriculture. "If we carry a dynamic message to them, and they carry it home to Mom and Dad, then we have taken a message to 9 million people."

The meeting's morning session was filled with speakers from the Texas Department of Agriculture

who outlined the goals and reasons for starting an AITC program in Texas. Shirley Traxler, Director of the Ag in the Classroom project for USDA, explained the role of USDA in providing support and educational materials and brought the participants up-to-date on the AITC programs in other states. Strategy groups met in the afternoon to discuss funding, curriculum and outreach.

AITC's first task, as agreed upon by the discussion groups, will be to coordinate the agricultural resources that already exist in Texas and set up a clearinghouse system. "People in need of resource materials or information shouldn't have to reinvent the wheel," stated Boley in a recent telephone interview. "For example, we found out that teachers have to teach a state-required course called Texas History. They're hungry for anything they can use in that course. We can integrate our materials into the history of Texas and make a lot of teachers very happy."

Once existing materials are collated, Texas AITC will identify the gaps and seek materials to fill them. Boley also plans to set up a Speaker's

Bureau where teachers can find speakers on all kinds of agricultural subjects.

"Agricultural education has been hurt by budget cuts, along with other educational programs in the past few years," said Boley. "We are trying to compensate for that and push to have agriculture included in all school curriculums. We feel that you really can't send children out into the world to be healthy, responsible citizens if they are agriculturally ignorant. They need to know the basics of where food and fiber come from."

Boley sees the goal of Ag in the Classroom as

the development of a rural-urban understanding. "Agriculture is still very important to Texans today. It's such a big state — there's an area of Texas perfect for almost any kind of crop or livestock." Although much of Texas is becoming urbanized, Boeli notes that Texas is still largely an agrarian society. "I see Texans as a people one generation closer to the land, unlike people in the more industrialized eastern states. We don't want the next generation to lose that special connection."

Contact: Leisa Boley (512) 463-7579



- **State Updates — FREE (revised edition due this fall)**
 - State by state review of AITC programs
- **Guide to Education Press and Youth Periodicals — FREE**
 - Major youth, education and school-directed periodicals published in this country
 - Cites only periodicals whose publishers might be interested in receiving information about agriculture, food, home economics, natural resources, or forestry
- **Back-to-School Ag in the Classroom Folders and Book Covers — FREE**
 - We have a large supply of pocket portfolios and book covers with the "Ag in the Classroom" logo proudly displayed on the front. Call or write our office and we'll gladly send as many as you need!

To order a copy of the above materials, write or call:

Ag in the Classroom
Room 232-W
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250
(202) 447-5727

Ever wonder what you're missing??

Find out what's available to READ, SEE & TEACH about Agriculture — in the revised Ag in the Classroom Resource Guide

The Resource Guide is a project of the Ag in the Classroom program. The guide is designed to direct educators to available agricultural resources for use in the classroom.

The guide is divided into four sections:

- Print
- Collections
- Audiovisuals and kits
- Resource guides

Each item is catalogued with the title, publisher/producer, grade level, format, a description of content, the agricultural concepts it teaches, price and ordering information.

To develop this guide, Ag in the Classroom contacted more than 200 organizations and publishers. We asked them what materials they were producing that would help classroom teachers, K-12, incorporate more information about agriculture into their teaching. We are compiling an updated version due out early in 1986. If you have any additions, please send information to:

Agriculture in the Classroom
Room 232-W
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250

Anyone whose materials are used in the Resource Guide will receive a complimentary copy. You will be notified when the guide is ready for distribution in future issues of *Ag in the Classroom Notes*.

'Cross-fertilization'

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tries to review all of the adopted texts and come up with suggestions to supplement them. "Ag in the Classroom has also been able to do things that we just don't have the resources to do ourselves," explains Carley. "For instance, USDA's 1979 *Yearbook of Agriculture for Kids* and the 1983 *Resource Guide*, are fabulous resources to offer educators;

we wouldn't have had the personnel and resources to put them together.

"Most of all, Ag in the Classroom serves as a catalyst," concludes Carley. "The cross-fertilization is great! For example, I am going to show the Council at our next meeting a copy of Kansas' curriculum guide, hot off the press. It's an excellent example of a well-integrated curriculum guide that teachers can really use — things like agricultural math problems that fit into the math lessons they're teaching. Kansas did an excellent job. I consider it a model we want to follow for our guide."

Contact: Judy Carley (317) 263-7830

Spotlight



Pat Buttita, science teacher at Issaquah's Liberty High School in Washington, wanted to give her students a perspective from space: she was the Washington alternate in the NASA Teacher in Space program.

Pat Buttita

It's hard to be more "citified" than science teacher Pat Buttita, but this year, science students at Liberty High in Issaquah, a suburb of Seattle, will get something new in her class — a touch of agriculture.

"I've always been a total city person," says Buttita, who was born in Brooklyn, raised in Los Angeles and now lives in Seattle. "I don't know anything about agriculture." When the Washington Agricultural Awareness Council's "Why Ag in My Classroom?" seminar was offered this summer at Washington State University, she decided there was no better time to learn. (See "Washington" p. 5).

Teaching agriculture is a radical change in the curriculum for Buttita. Among other things, she discovered Washington State University's use of genetics in wheat breeding and other plant and animal sciences. "I think a good teaching technique is to teach things that you can use, that have an application in students' lives," says Buttita. "I see agriculture as another application of biology."

Buttita took her experience at the week-long seminar and applied it to her own secondary school curriculum. Now in her biology and chemis-

try classes, Pat Buttita teaches agriculture, too. In a study section on cells, students examine dyed pieces of potato. Buttita speaks to the class about potatoes as a crop and as an economic commodity. When she teaches the elements in chemistry class, Buttita introduces the concept of trace elements required by certain crops.

Come spring, Buttita's students will study more specific subjects, including botany, zoology and genetics. In genetics, rather than use only human equations (blonde hair and blue eyes,) Buttita plans to use agricultural examples, like the genetics of cow breeding. In zoology, each student is required to create an insect collection. Buttita will ask students to relate their discoveries to the effect of insects on regional crops and forests.

Buttita's students will get a clearer view of the world of agriculture — and a better understanding of their own environment. Buttita notes that Issaquah has grown rapidly, from a rural community to a Seattle suburb. Students need to understand why Issaquah isn't rural anymore, Buttita believes, and they need to know why farmlands are being urbanized all over the U.S. Now that the Washington Agricultural Awareness Council has answered many of Pat Buttita's questions, she can help her students understand the effects of agriculture in their own lives.

3R's + A = New Rule for Washington Schools

That's "A" for Agriculture, the newest partner of the 3 R's — if the Washington Agricultural Awareness Council has its way. And they're working hard to get it, by sponsoring exciting and creative agricultural education workshops for teachers, the most recent held this summer at Washington State University.

The five day workshop, entitled "Why Ag in My Classroom?", included field trips, classroom lectures, social events and agricultural education materials. Many events were hosted by local agribusinesses, commodity groups and private farmers. Eleven teachers attended; WAAC paid \$30 per teacher of the \$130 registration fee, and the Kittitas County CowBelles sponsored one teacher entirely. The aim of the workshop was to educate teachers about the importance of agriculture so they can pass the knowledge on to their students in class.

"Every generation is further removed from agriculture," noted Martin Waananen, Asst. Director of Resident Instruction for WSU's College of Agri-

culture and a member of the WAAC board. To many Americans, "agriculture is really the local supermarket. They don't understand the complexity of our food and fiber system. For the welfare of our country," he continued, "I think it is critical that people understand the importance of agriculture so they don't make decisions that are detrimental to our future food supply."

The teachers who attended the Washington Workshop got a taste of the agricultural chain, with courses that included:

- What plants grow where and why?
- What animals grow where and why?
- Wheat, from Farm to Consumer
- Cooperatives in Agriculture
- Food Processing: Microbiology and Nutrition
- Food Processing: Chemistry and Engineering
- Developing Markets in China
- Food Retailing

Helen Laws, the elected president of the Council and the wife of a Greenbluff area orchardist, explained the goals of WAAC. "We want children to realize what a tremendous impact agriculture has on the economy of the state and of the world."

Contact: Julie Sandberg (206) 753-2080

The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

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